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PATENT

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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

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of

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for

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CONTROLLABLY ROTATABLE SEAT

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a rotating seat for an amusement ride.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

7 Several patents, *e.g.*, United States patent numbers 5,421,783; 5,649,866; and 5,810,671
8 have a passenger carrier that is accelerated upward by bungee cords and can relatively freely
9 swing about the ends of such cords. There is, however, no control over any rotation of the
10 carrier that does occur.

United States patent no. 6,083,111 does involve controlled rotation of a passenger chair (also termed a “support”) for an amusement ride. The degree of rotation is, however, purposefully limited; the limited rotation that is possible apparently occurs only over a restricted, fixed portion of a course upon a tower; and only downward movement occurs when the chair has been rotated from its initial substantially vertical position.

16 Lines 31 through 37 in column 2 of patent no. 6,083,111 explain, "The passenger
17 support, together with the passenger, is tilted forward into a falling orientation which is at a
18 predetermined tilt-angle to the pre-fall orientation. The passenger support, together with the
19 passenger, is dropped or propelled from the drop position to a lower position while the passenger
20 support and the passenger are in the forward tilted falling orientation"

21 Lines 3 and 4 in column 3 further clarify, "for safety reasons, the tilt-angle of the
22 passenger and the passenger support is limited . . ."

23 Patent no. 6,083,111 continues, in lines 26 through 28 of column 3, by asserting, "A
24 travel course for the carriage is established by engaging a guide that is connected to the carriage
25 upon an elongate rail or track that is coupled to an elevating tower."

26 Lines 23 through 25, 39 through 42, and 46 through 49 of column 3 state, "The degree of
27 tilt between the pre-fall orientation **92** and the falling orientation **95** is predetermined and
28 restricted When the latching mechanism **40** is released, the passenger support **22** is
29 permitted to tilt or be tilted from the pre-fall orientation **92** toward and into the falling orientation
30 **95**. . . . Alternatively, the tilting action can be induced by an operating mechanism B43B which

1 in the described embodiment is a rotary motor and may be exemplarily electromechanical,
2 hydraulic or other suitable configuration.”

3 Lines 39 through 46 and 55 through 57 of column 6 consistently provide, “Upon reaching
4 the drop position **70**, the passenger support **22** is permitted to tilt, or is tilted from the upright and
5 sitting pre-fall orientation **92** to the tilted falling orientation **95**. To accomplish such tilting, the
6 latching mechanism **40** is released and the passenger **55** is either motored to the tilted position
7 using the operating mechanism **43** or the support **22** is simply allowed to drop to the tilted
8 position and falling orientation **95** under the passenger’s **55** own weight. . . . The tilting action
9 is accommodated by the pivot connection **37** and is limited either by the operating mechanism **43**
10 or appropriate stops.” Then line 67 of column 3 through line 2 of column 7 declares, “Either
11 simultaneously or shortly thereafter, the carriage **34** begins to drop over a falling travel distance
12 **73**.”

13 Finally, lines 53 through 56 in column 7 observe, “The maximum safe tilt angle **98** is
14 experimentally determined and then the actual tilt angle **98** is restricted within a range between
15 that determined angle and the upright position.”

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

2 The Controllably Rotatable Seat, which may be a single seat or several seats, of the
3 present invention can be rotated at any time during the operation of an amusement ride upon
4 which it is attached. Furthermore, this seat is able to be rotated at least substantially ninety
5 degrees.

6 The seat need not be attached by a track to a tower and is, preferably, attached to a
7 platform that is support by cables, preferably three. Each of such cables travels to an elevated
8 point on a tower. In such an embodiment, the platform is elevated as the cables are retracted
9 down the towers.

10 Rotation of the seat may be accomplished by an electrical motor, pneumatics, hydraulics,
11 or any other mechanism that is well known in the art for producing rotation.

12 Rotation can be based upon the seat's having reached a target detectable with a proximity
13 sensor; the passage of time; the seat's having reached a height measured with any device known
14 in the art for measuring distances, such as a laser range finder; a cable's having moved a
15 specified distance, which can be determined, for example, by noting the revolutions of a pulley
16 over which the cable passes; or any other measurable criterion, such as a desired speed or
17 acceleration. Determination of the time for rotating the seat to its original position can be
18 similarly made.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows a first view of the Controllably Rotatable Seat.

Figure 2 provides an alternate view of the Controllably Rotatable Seat.

4 Figure 3 depicts a target on a tower to be detected by a sensor associated with the
5 Controllably Rotatable Seat.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

2 The seat 1 is attached to an arm 2 that is rotated by a means for rotating 3 which is
3 preferably an electric motor but which can be pneumatics, hydraulics, or any other mechanism
4 that is well known in the art for producing rotation. (The term "seat" is used herein to mean
5 either a single seat or a group of two or more seats.)

6 Preferably, but not necessarily, a lever arm **4** connects the arm **2** to the means for rotating
7 **3** so that the point of rotation of the means for rotating **3** will be substantially aligned with the
8 center of gravity of a participant sitting on the seat **1**.

9 Also preferably, but not necessarily, the lower portion 5 of the seat 1 is a saddle seat, *i.e.*,
10 it is formed in substantially the same shape as a saddle for a horse, in order to cause the
11 participant to feel exposed to excitement.

12 The arm **2** and, consequently, the seat **1** can preferably, but not necessarily, rotate at least
13 ninety degrees.

14 Preferably, but not necessarily, there would also be a means for retaining the participant
15 to the seat 1, such as a harness.

16 The arm **2** and the means for rotating **3**, as well as the lever arm **4** when employed, are
17 attached to a platform **6**, which can be slidably connected to a vertical tower or placed upon any
18 other amusement ride (in fact, some rides, such as the car of a roller coaster, can, themselves,
19 serve as the platform **6**), but which is preferably connected to cables **7** that are suspended from
20 towers **8**, preferably, but not necessarily three towers. As explained above, each of the cables **7**
21 travels to an elevated point on a tower **8**; and the platform **6** is elevated as the cables **7** are
22 retracted down the towers **8**. Attachment of the arm **2**, and the lever arm **4** when employed, is a
23 rotatable attachment to the platform **6**.

24 A timer **9** communicating with the means for rotating **3** can be programmed with the time
25 to commence rotation and the time to begin rotating the seat **1** to its original orientation.

26 Alternatively, a target **10** can be located on a tower **8** or other object at a point where
27 rotation is desired to commence as the seat **1** passes the target **10**, and a second target **11** can be
28 placed on a tower **8** or other object at a point where it is desired to have the seat **1** start rotating
29 back to its original orientation. A sensor **12** capable of detecting the targets **10, 11** would be
30 mounted on the platform **6** and communicate either directly or through a preferably, but not

1 necessarily, programmable, logic unit 13 such as a computer with the means for rotating 3.
2 Optionally, only a single target 10 would be employed; and the seat 1 would start rotating as it
3 passed the target 10 going in a first direction and would begin rotating to its original orientation
4 as it passed the target 10 going in the substantially opposite direction.

5 A device known in the art for measuring distances could also determine the distance
6 between a known elevation (or other position) and the platform 6. Such device communicates
7 through a, preferably, but not necessarily, programmable, logic unit 13 such as a computer with
8 the means for rotating 3. Initial rotation would commence at a given distance, and rotation back
9 to the original orientation of the seat 1 would begin at another specified distance, with such
10 criteria either set into the logic unit 13 at the factory or, when the logic unit is programmable,
11 programmed into the logic unit 13 by a user. Communication in this embodiment would
12 preferably, but not necessarily, be by digitally encoded radio signals.

13 Finally, when cables 7 are employed to propel the platform 6, any device well known in
14 the art for measuring the distance a cable 7 moves could function just as does the device for
15 measuring distances discussed in the preceding paragraph.

16 Also, as discussed above, any device known in the art for measuring speed or
17 acceleration or any other measurable criterion associated with the amusement ride could
18 determine the time for rotation and the time for return of the seat 1 to its original orientation just
19 as discussed for the device for measuring distances.

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